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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11, 2007

A QUICK LOOK AT THE TURKISH PRESS
April 11, 2007

In Today's Papers

Turkish National Security Council Discusses Iraq, Barzani
All papers report that a declaration released at the end of the Turkish National Security Council (MGK) meeting was seen as a diplomatic warning to Iraq. The declaration said "political, economic, and other approaches" were to be applied in dealings with Iraq, without making a direct reference to Iraqi Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani or cross-border military measures. It also said security operations against terrorism will continue with determination. Developments in Kirkuk, Iran, and Cyprus as well as the fundamentalist threat in Turkey were also discussed at the meeting. Radikal says Ankara, after presenting a note of protest to Iraq demanding concrete measures against the PKK, now will watch developments in Iraq over the next two weeks. If Baghdad fails to move against the PKK, Turkey will implement "sanctions" such as closing Turkish airspace to civilian flights to and from northern Iraq, and closing the Habur border crossing. Turkey, in the meantime, will tell the US and UN Security Council that anti-PKK cross-border military incursions into northern Iraq were inevitable. Intellectual Islamist-oriented Zaman and mainstream Milliyet quote US Ambassador to Turkey Ross Wilson as saying in reference to the Barzani remarks about a possible Turkish intervention in Kirkuk, "this kind of rhetoric is unhelpful." Ambassador Wilson said Turkey, like all countries, had "a right to defend itself."

Editorial Commentary: Turkey's Iraq Policy
Abdulhamit Bilici writes in the intellectual Islamist-oriented Zaman: "Barzani's remarks provide some clues to Ankara as to how to shape a strategy regarding Barzani as well as the region. First of all, the situation indicates the strong need for Turkey to engage in dialogue with the leaders in the region. For instance Talabani, a Kurdish leader, for the first time criticized Barzani -- thanks to

the dialogue initiated with him by Turkey during the Riyadh summit. The second important point is that Barzani received open criticism from Washington about his remarks. In a statement by the State Department, Barzani was referred as 'Mr.' as opposed to 'president' which symbolizes the tone of Washington's reaction. The third important point for Turkey is to keep its cool regarding Barzani and try not to fall into the trap set by his statements. Both Turks and Kurds must realize that the long lasting and realistic way to handle the issue goes through transparent borders not through border wars."

Oktaay Eksi comments in the mainstream daily Hurriyet: "Barzani should not be underestimated because he knows what he is doing. He is capable of making threatening remarks against Turkey's crucial national interests and he should be taken seriously. We should be able to come up with a better policy to handle the issue rather than give the usual, empty response such as 'we will do whatever is needed.' This is not about Barzani only, nor is it about the PKK. The US, which supports them on one hand, and tries to divert Turkey's attention on the other hand, is also a part of the picture. Thus a national policy is needed to evaluate every aspect of foreign policy and it certainly requires a national consensus. Turkey should seriously consider its options for handling this problem. Every option, including the military operation needs to be discussed thoroughly before a policy line is established. Sadly enough Turkey is now fully busy with something else. Whether the PM is going to announce his candidacy for the presidency seems to be occupying every part of the national agenda."

Turkish Commercial Airliner Hijacked

All papers report Mehmet Goksingol, an unemployed man from Diyarbakir with a drug-related criminal record, hijacked a Pegasus Airline passenger plane on Tuesday after take off from Diyarbakir,

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but then gave himself up to the police after the plane landed in Ankara. Papers quote authorities as saying the hijacker acted from personal, not political motives, and may be mentally ill.

Presidential Election Process

Milliyet, Cumhuriyet, Radikal, Sabah and others: Today's papers report that Parliament speaker Arinc will start the Presidential election process today. Arinc is going to announce that the Presidential candidacy submission period will start on April 16 and end on April 25. At an interview with NTV Arinc said that PM Erdogan, who had said that he would not meet with the opposition due to their recent rhetoric, should meet with other political parties about the Presidential election. Arinc reiterated his view that 184 is the quorum number for the general assembly to convene and that to start the Presidential election process 184 will be enough rather than 367, as opposition leaders claim. Meanwhile, responding to a question, the Head of the Constitutional Court, Tulay Tugcu, said that in case of application to the court regarding the number of deputies required to be present during first round of the presidential election vote, the court would quickly issue a decision on the problem -- before the second round of voting.

Turkish Army Shells a Village near Zakho in Iraq

Sabah, Milliyet and Zaman: Reports on the Peyamner web site of northern Iraq claimed on Monday that Turkish forces on Sunday shelled the Zakho area of northern Iraq with artillery.

Nobel Laureates Call for Turkey-Armenia Reconciliation

Sabah and Zaman report the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity (EWF) released an appeal signed by 53 Nobel Laureates, calling on the Turkish government to end discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities and abolish Article 301 of the Turkish penal code. Laureates also urged Turkey and Armenia to open the Turkish-Armenian border as well as establish full diplomatic relations.

TV Highlights

NTV (6 A.M.)

Domestic News

- Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul will travel to Turkish Cyprus on April 12 to meet with "president" Mehmet Ali Talat. Gul will inaugurate a hotel in Girne on April 13.
- Independent MP Mahmut Kocak, formerly of the AKP, has announced he will join ANAVATAN, reportedly on Monday, raising the number of ANAVATAN members to 20 and enabling the party to form a party group in the parliament again.
- Turkish security operations against the PKK continue in Tunceli and Bingol provinces.
- World Bank plans to extend to Turkey special loans for curbing unemployment and creating new jobs.

International News

- The Iraqi parliament will reportedly review article 140 of Iraq's Constitution related to the status of Kirkuk despite objections coming from Kurdish groups.
- A UN photo and text exhibit on the 13th anniversary of the Rwanda genocide has been delayed after Turkish objections to a mention of the killing of Armenians in Turkey in 1915.
- 20 Turkish workers have been abducted by Iraqi colleagues in Samarra in reaction to delays in the payment of Iraqi workers.
- On Tuesday, four Serbian paramilitary members seen in a video

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gunning down Bosnian Muslims near Srebrenica in 1995 were convicted of war crimes against civilians by Serbia's War Crimes Court.

WILSON